

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims**

Claims 10-20 (cancelled)

21. (New): A guard device for a front of an escalator handrail, the guard device having a length approximately equal to a distance between a front end of the handrail and a foremost step of the escalator, the guard device comprising:

a guide channel formed at the bottom of said guard device with a predetermined depth to receive a part of the handrail positioned in an entry zone of the escalator that resides between the front end of the handrail and the foremost step of the escalator;

a sterilization unit installed in the guard device to sterilize at least part of the handrail of the escalator received in said guide channel;

an advertising display unit provided on a top of said guard device on a slant to the end part of the handrail in the entry zone of the escalator; and

a control unit which controls said sterilization unit and said advertising display unit with electric power.

22. (New): The guard device as set forth in claim 21, wherein said guide channel is provided along the center line of the bottom surface of the guard device.

23. (New): The guard device as set forth in claim 21, wherein said sterilization unit is embodied by ultraviolet lamps installed inside of the guard device and spaced from the handrail received therein by a certain distance while facing the handrail.

24. (New): The guard device as set forth in claim 21, wherein said sterilization unit is embodied by a sprayer installed inside of the guard device and spaced from the handrail received therein by a certain distance while facing the handrail.

25. (New): The guard device as set forth in claim 21, wherein said sterilization unit is embodied by an applying means to apply bactericidal liquid to the handrail received therein.

26. (New): The guard device as set forth in claim 23, wherein the sterilization unit comprises a reflecting plate to irradiate ultraviolet light to side surfaces as well as an upper surface of the handrail received therein.

27. (New): The guard device as set forth in claim 25, wherein said applying means includes a roller which is supplied with bactericidal liquid and is in contact with the handrail to apply the bactericidal liquid.

28. (New): The guard device as set forth in claim 21, wherein the display panel of the advertising display unit is embodied by any one selected from a group consisting of an LED, an LCD, an organic EL sheet and hologram.

29. (New): The guard device as set forth in claim 21, wherein the advertising display unit is constituted to be programmed to display desired characters or logos.

30. (New): The guard device as set forth in claim 29, wherein the advertising display unit is constituted to enable the advertising contents to be substituted with different contents by changing the program input to the advertising display unit.

31. (New): The guard device as set forth in claim 21, wherein the display panel of the advertising display unit is covered with a transparent cover embodied by any one selected from a group consisting of plastic, synthetic resin, glass or acrylic resin.

32. (New): The guard device as set forth in claim 21, further comprising an air cleaning unit which functions to draw air in the entry zone of the escalator, remove bacteria and dust from the air, and discharge the air outside the guard device.

33. (New): The guard device as set forth in claim 21, wherein the control unit is provided inside of the guard device.

34. (New): A guard device for a front end of an escalator handrail, the guard device having a length approximately equal to a distance between the front end of the handrail and a foremost step of the escalator, the guard device comprising:

a guide channel formed at the bottom of said guard device with a predetermined depth to receive a part of the handrail positioned between the front end of the handrail and the forefront step of the escalator;

a sterilization unit installed in the guard device for sterilizing the handrail as it moves through the guard device;

an advertising display unit provided on said guard device adjacent the front end of the handrail and on a slant to the front end of the handrail; and

a control unit which controls said sterilization unit and said advertising display unit with electric power.

35. (New): A guard device as set forth in claim 34, wherein said sterilization unit is embodied by ultraviolet lamps installed inside of the guard device and spaced from the handrail received therein by a certain distance while facing the handrail.

36. (New): A guard device as set forth in claim 34, wherein the advertising display unit is constituted to be programmed to display desired characters or logos.

37. (New): A guard device for a front end of an escalator handrail, the guard device comprising:

an enclosure defining an interior in which a part of a top of the handrail and at least a part of the front end of the handrail are received, said enclosure having along a bottom thereof an opening disposed such that a bottom of the handrail enters the interior of the enclosure via said opening;

a sterilization unit disposed in the enclosure for sterilizing the handrail as it moves through the enclosure;

an advertising display unit disposed in the enclosure adjacent the front end of the handrail and on a slant to the front end of the handrail; and

a control unit which controls said sterilization unit and said advertising display unit with electric power.

38. (New): A guard device as set forth in claim 37, wherein said sterilization unit is embodied by ultraviolet lamps installed inside of the guard device and spaced from the handrail received therein by a certain distance while facing the handrail.

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39. (New): A guard device as set forth in claim 37, wherein the advertising display unit is constituted to be programmed to display desired characters or logos.

40. (New): A guard device as set forth in claim 39, wherein the advertising display unit is constituted to enable the advertising contents to be substituted with different contents by changing the program input to the advertising display unit.